

Learner Persistence Program Self-Assessment of Counseling and Support Strategies

This compilation of promising practices in learner persistence draws from the New England Learner Persistence Project, research by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (Comings, Parrella & Soricone, 1999) and the NCSALL Learner Persistence Study Circle Guide (2005), *Equipped for the Future*, the *Stick With It* project of the National Research and Development Centre in the United Kingdom, and others. The evidence for the promising practices comes from research and professional wisdom. Practices in some categories necessarily overlap, such as goal-setting upon entrance and during participation.

We hope that doing the self-assessment is a fruitful experience for you. For more information, please contact the New England Learner Persistence Project Director, Andy Nash at anash@worlded.org

Program self-assessment scale: 1 – Top priority need to address 2 - We should work on this at some point 3 – We’re already working on this but could do it better 4 – We do this adequately 5 – We do this well		
Promising Practices in Learner Persistence	Self- Assmt	Comments, Questions to Explore, Evidence for the Score
Counseling and Support		
a. Assess and address learning difficulties, including vision and hearing screenings, trauma, addiction and other mental health issues.		
b. Have a system for identifying students’ needs for support services; determine which needs the program is equipped to address and which cases should be referred to other agencies; document counseling activities and referrals; and follow up on each case.		
c. Promote a support network within the program where staff, volunteers, or peer mentors make personal connections with specific students on a regular basis.		
d. Discuss students’ persistence, learning and aspirations. Continue the process of exploring and articulating long and short-term goals, and of monitoring a learning plan that addresses instructional and support services that move them toward their goals.		
e. Establish learning plans for those who may stop out and help them find suitable ways to re-engage in learning until they reach their goals, including offering distance learning options.		
f. Implement a formal system for staying in contact with and supporting the continuous learning of students, especially those who are absent or stopping out.		

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g. Establish a system of providing support to students who are close to graduating or meeting their goals, and those who seem at risk of dropping out.		
h. Provide or arrange for student transportation to and from the program (e.g. car pools, van service) and advocate for improved public transportation.		
i. Arrange workshops and support groups on topics of concern to students, such as health and nutrition, violence and trauma, immigration policy, and stress management.		
j. Include students’ family and friends in program activities.		
k. Help adults develop career aspirations and make informed choices about careers and further education and training.		